

SHAKTI: Stigma reduction, Health care provider Awareness and Knowledge enhancement on Transgender issues in India

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The current study is an Indo-US collaborative study funded by NIH/ ICMR (2012-2014). Dr Swagata Banik (Baldwin Wallace College) is the US PI on this project and the Dr H R Jerajani (Mahatma Gandhi Mission's medical college and Hospital) is the Indian PI. The project has been approved by ICMR and has also received ethics clearance from The Humsafar Trust – IRB and MGM Medical College and Hospital – IRB.

The broad objective of this study is to advance HIV prevention science by conducting formative research on how culturally relevant intervention can be used to overcome personal and social factors associating stigma to promote health care access among stigmatized and at risk population. The project proposes to develop and pilot-test a culturally relevant health care providers (HCP)-focused intervention to reduce HIV/STI-related stigma and discrimination towards male-to-female transgendered population (locally known as Hijra) in health care setting in Mumbai, India. Thus, we anticipate that our current project will initiate to bring about positive change in our health care set up. Given that negative attitudes of caregivers may be a substantial deterrent to seeking health care, including HIV testing and care, in highly marginalized Hijra/ TG sub population who are at very risk of HIV infection in India (and elsewhere), the current study aims to move beyond documentation of Hijra/ TG and HIV specific stigma to piloting a HCP focused intervention.

This study in the second year and an intervention is proposed with approximately 60 health care providers that include public and private medical practitioners and non-medical staff along with 25 representatives from the Tg and Hijra communities in November 2013 and will be followed up with the same populations in February 2013 end.